

EXHIBIT K

Dear Editor:

Politics is a tough business. I should know. I spent 14 years as Governor of Illinois and took my share of lumps from partisans, politicians and the media. But in my 20 years as a U.S. Attorney and governor, one of the many valuable skills I learned is being able to know a person of honor, honesty and integrity when I meet him or her. That's why it is especially frustrating to read stories about Speaker Michael Madigan that are based on unfair and error-filled criticisms that are completely devoid of facts. I have known Mike Madigan very well, both professionally and personally, for more than 35 years. There is no public servant whose integrity and personal moral code is stronger than Mike Madigan's.

I worked with Mike Madigan for 14 years in my capacity as governor of the State of Illinois. In eight of those years, he served as Speaker of the House, allowing us to work very closely on a number of state issues. As now, the state faced its share of challenges while I was governor, but Mike Madigan then, as he does now, served as a strong leader. And while we had our disagreements, I could always count on Mike to give it to me straight, tell me the truth and stick to his word. Such qualities aren't easy to find in the world of politics.

Some people may not like Mike Madigan. I can honestly say, as a Republican, there were times when I didn't much care for him, either. But I always respected him, and I have never questioned his integrity, his ethics or his deep devotion to the State of Illinois. I am deeply disappointed in the way this issue has been presented in the media given the clear lack of facts and the way in which I, and others who know him best, understand how Mike Madigan conducts himself each and every day.

Sincerely,

James R. Thompson
Governor, State of Illinois
1977-1991